RIDING AT NIGHT

At night it is harder for you to see and be seen. Picking your headlight or taillight out of the car lights around you is not easy for other drivers. To compensate, you should:

Reduce Your Speed — Ride even slower than you would during the day — particularly on roads you don't know well. This will increase your chances of avoiding a hazard.

Increase Distance — Distances are harder to judge at night than during the day. Your eyes rely upon shadows and light contrasts to determine how far away an object is and how fast it is coming. These contrasts are missing or distorted under artificial lights at night. Open up a three-second following distance or more. And allow more distance to pass and be passed.

Use the Car Ahead — The headlights of the car ahead can give you a better view of the road than even your high beam can. Taillights bouncing up and down can alert you to bumps or rough pavement.

Use Your High Beam — Get all the light you can. Use your high beam whenever you are not following or meeting a car. Be visible, wear reflective materials when riding at night.

Be flexible about lane position. Change to whatever portion of the lane is best able to help you see, be seen, and keep an adequate space cushion.

7 Test Yourself

Reflective clothing should:

A. Be worn at night.

B. Be worn during the day.

C. Not be worn.

D. Be worn day and night.

Answer - page 40

CRASH AVOIDANCE

No matter how careful you are, there will be times when you find yourself in a tight spot. Your chances of getting out safely depend on your ability to react quickly and properly. Often, a crash occurs because a rider is not prepared or skilled in crash-avoidance maneuvers.

Know when and how to stop or swerve, two skills critical to avoiding a crash. It is not always desirable or possible to stop quickly to avoid an obstacle. Riders must also be able to swerve around an obstacle. Determining the skill necessary for the situation is important as well.

Studies show that most crash-involved riders:

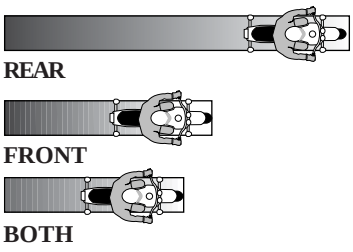
- **Underbrake** the front tire and overbrake the rear.
- **Did not** separate braking from swerving or did not choose swerving when it was appropriate.

The following information offers some good advice.

QUICK STOPS

To stop quickly, apply both brakes at the same time. Don't be shy about using the front brake, but don't "grab" it, either. Squeeze the brake lever firmly and progressively. If the front wheel locks, release the front brake immediately then reapply it firmly. At the same time, press down on the rear brake. If you accidentally lock the rear brake on a good traction surface, keep it locked until you have completely stopped. Even with a locked rear wheel, you can control the motorcycle on a straightaway *if it is upright and going in a straight line.*

STOPPING DISTANCE



Always use both brakes at the same time to stop. The front brake can provide 70% or more of the potential stopping power.

If you must stop quickly *while turning or riding a curve*, the best technique is to straighten the bike upright first and then brake. However, it may not always be possible to straighten the motorcycle and then stop. If you must brake while leaning, apply light brakes and reduce the throttle. As you slow, you can reduce your lean angle and apply more brake pressure until the motorcycle is straight and maximum brake pressure is possible. You should "straighten" the handlebars in the last few feet of stopping, the motorcycle should then be straight
up and in balance.

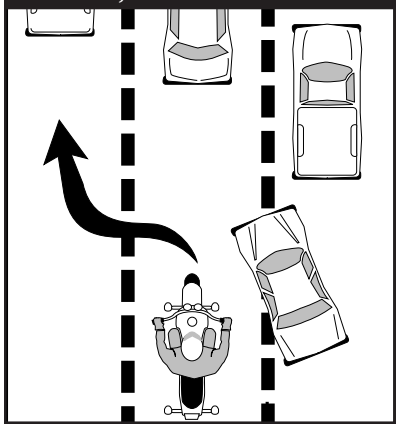
SWERVING OR TURNING QUICKLY

Sometimes you may not have enough room to stop, even if you use both brakes properly. An object might appear suddenly in your path. Or the car ahead might squeal to a stop. The only way to avoid a crash may be to turn quickly, or swerve around it.

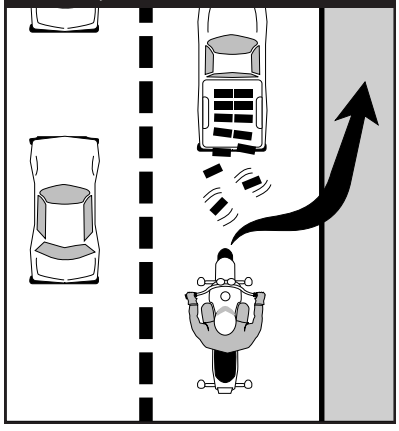
A swerve is any sudden change in direction. It can be two quick turns, or a rapid shift to the side. Apply a small amount of hand pressure to the handgrip located on the side of your intended direction of escape. This will cause the motorcycle to lean quickly.
The sharper the turn(s), the more the motorcycle must lean.

Keep your body upright and allow the motorcycle to lean in the direction of the turn while keeping your knees against the tank and your feet solidly on the pegs. Let

SWERVE, THEN BRAKE



BRAKE, THEN SWERVE



the motorcycle move underneath you. Make your escape route the target of your vision. Press on the opposite handgrip once you clear the obstacle to return you to your original direction of travel. To swerve to the left, press the left handgrip, then press the right to recover. To swerve to the right, press right, then left.

IF BRAKING IS REQUIRED, SEPARATE IT FROM SWERVING. Brake before or after — never while swerving.

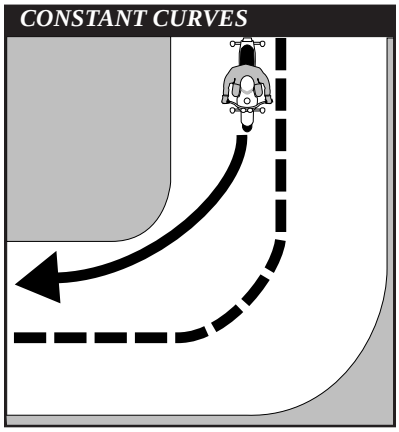
CORNERING

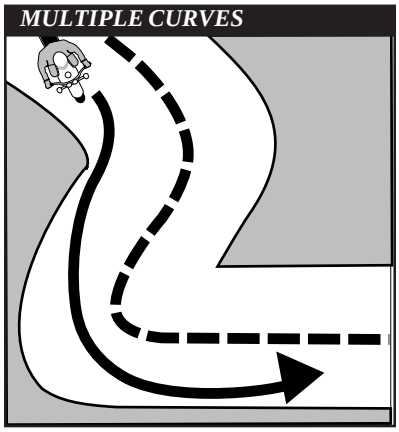
A primary cause of single-vehicle crashes is motorcyclists running wide in a curve or turn and colliding with the roadway or a fixed object.

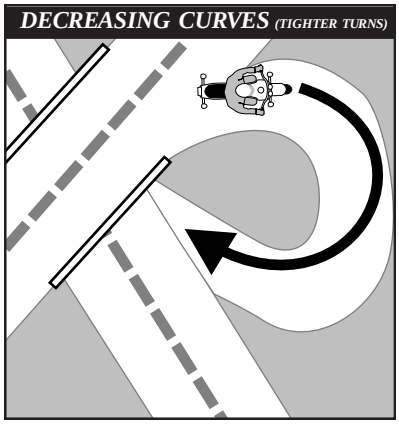
Every curve is different. Be alert to whether a curve remains constant, gradually widens, gets tighter, or involves multiple turns.

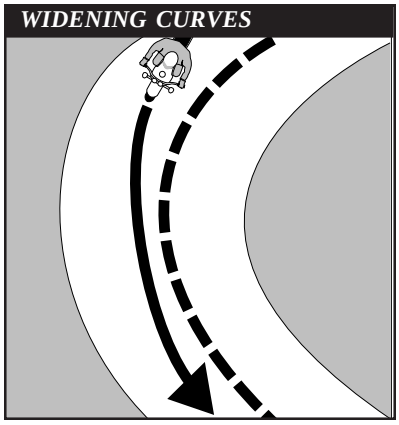
Ride within your skill level and posted speed limits.

Your best path may not always follow the curve of the road.









Change lane position depending on traffic, road conditions and curve of the road. If no traffic is present, start at the outside of a curve to increase your line of sight and the effective radius of the turn. As you turn, move toward the inside of the curve, and as you pass the center, move to the outside to exit.

Another alternative is to move to the center of your lane before entering a curve — and stay there until you exit. This permits you to spot approaching traffic as soon as possible. You can also adjust for traffic "crowding" the center line, or debris blocking part of your lane.

8 Test Yourself

The best way to stop quickly is to:

A. Use the front brake only.

B. Use the rear brake first.

C. Throttle down and use the front brake.

D. Use both brakes at the same time.

Answer - page 40

HANDLING DANGEROUS SURFACES

Your chance of falling or being involved in a crash increases whenever you ride across:

- **Uneven surfaces or obstacles.**
- **Slippery surfaces.**
- **Railroad tracks.**
- **Grooves and gratings.**

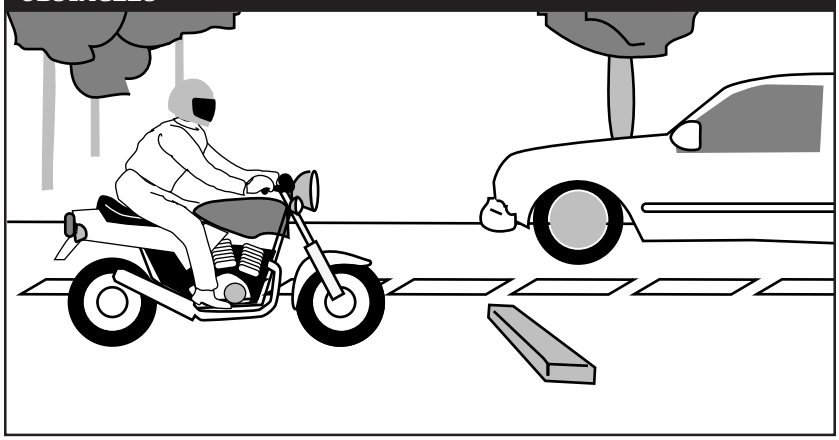
UNEVEN SURFACES AND OBSTACLES

Watch for uneven surfaces such as bumps, broken pavement, potholes, or small pieces of highway trash.

Try to avoid obstacles by slowing or going around them. If you must go over the obstacle, first, determine if it is possible. Approach it at as close to a 90° angle as possible. Look where you want to go to control your path of travel. If you have to ride over the obstacle, you should:

- **Slow down** as much as possible before contact.
- **Make sure** the motorcycle is straight.

OBSTACLES



- **Rise slightly** off the seat with your weight on the footpegs to absorb the shock with your knees and elbows, and avoid being thrown off the motorcycle.
- **Just before contact**, roll on the throttle slightly to lighten the front end.

If you ride over an object on the street, pull off the road and check your tires and rims for damage before riding any farther.

SLIPPERY SURFACES

Motorcycles handle better when ridden on surfaces that permit good traction. Surfaces that provide poor traction include:

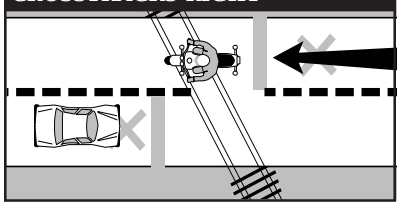
- **Wet pavement**, particularly just after it starts to rain and before surface oil washes to the side of the road.
- **Gravel roads**, or where sand and gravel collect.
- **Mud, snow, and ice**.
- **Lane markings**, steel plates and manhole covers, especially when wet.

To ride safely on slippery surfaces:

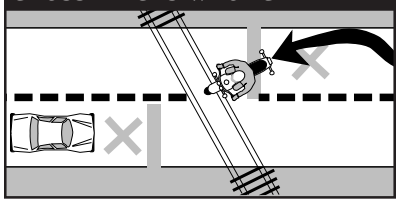
- **Reduce Speed** — Slow down before you get to a slippery surface to lessen your chances of skidding. Your motorcycle needs more distance to stop. And, it is particularly important to reduce speed before entering wet curves.
- **Avoid Sudden Moves** — Any sudden change in speed or direction can cause a skid. Be as smooth as possible when you speed up, shift gears, turn or brake.
- **Use Both Brakes** — The front brake is still effective, even on a slippery surface. Squeeze the brake lever gradually to avoid locking the front wheel. Remember, gentle pressure on the rear brake.
- **The center of a lane** can be hazardous when wet. When it starts to rain, ride in the tire tracks left by cars. Often, the left tire track will be the best position, depending on traffic and other road conditions as well.
- **Watch for oil spots** when you put your foot down to stop or park. You may slip and fall.
- **Dirt and gravel** collect along the sides of the road — especially on curves and ramps leading to and from highways. Be aware of what's on the edge of the road, particularly when making sharp turns and getting on or off freeways at high speeds.
- **Rain dries and snow melts faster** on some sections of a road than on others. Patches of ice tend to crop up in low or shaded areas and on bridges and overpasses. Wet surfaces or wet leaves are just as slippery. Ride on the least slippery portion of the lane and reduce speed.

Cautious riders steer clear of roads covered with ice or snow. If you can't avoid a slippery surface, keep your motorcycle straight up and proceed as *slowly* as possible. If you encounter a large surface so slippery that you must coast, or travel at a walking pace, consider letting your feet skim along the surface. If the motorcycle starts to fall, you can catch yourself. Be sure to keep off the brakes. If possible, squeeze the clutch and coast. Attempting this maneuver at anything other than the slowest of speeds could prove hazardous.

CROSSTRACKS-RIGHT



CROSSTRACKS-WRONG

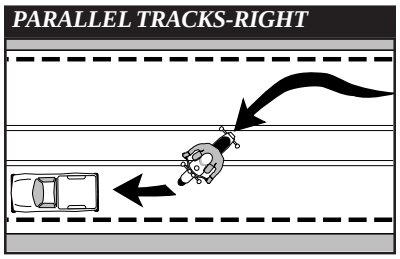


RAILROAD TRACKS, TROLLEY TRACKS AND PAVEMENT SEAMS

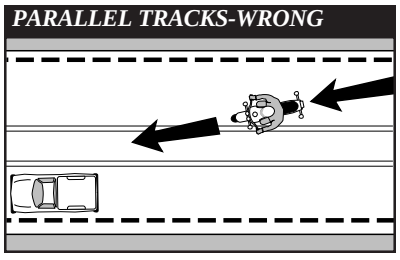
Usually it is safer to ride straight within your lane to cross tracks. Turning to take tracks head-on (at a 90° angle) can be more dangerous — your path may carry you into another lane of traffic.

For track and road seams that run parallel to your course, move far enough away from tracks, ruts, or pavement seams to cross at an angle of at least 45°. Then, make a quick, sharp turn. Edging across could catch your tires and throw you off balance.

PARALLEL TRACKS-RIGHT



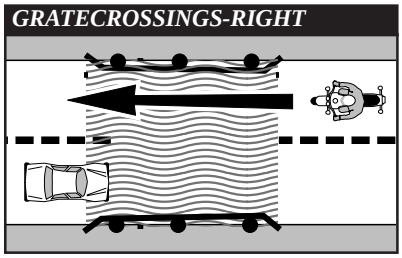
PARALLEL TRACKS-WRONG



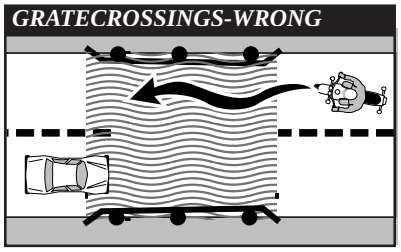
GROOVES AND GRATINGS

Riding over rain grooves or bridge gratings may cause a motorcycle to weave. The uneasy, wandering feeling is generally not hazardous. Relax, maintain a steady speed and ride straight across. Crossing at an angle forces riders to zigzag to stay in the lane. The zigzag is far more hazardous than the wandering feeling.

GRATECROSSINGS-RIGHT



GRATECROSSINGS-WRONG



9 Test Yourself

When it starts to rain it is usually best to:

A. Ride in the center of the lane.

B. Pull off to the side until the rain stops.

C. Ride in the tire tracks left by cars.

D. Increase your speed.

Answer - page 40